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Toronto metro

Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2016 | High 3°C/Low -2°C Snow

University of Toronto students Katerina Mizrokhi, left, and Melissa Vincent spent time in N.Y.C. last summer studying cultural and arts institutions. They say we can learn a thing or two from The Big Apple.
EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

True culture vultures

Toronto students return from New York City with ideas to make our cityscape more artful — and accessible metroNEWS

SURVEY

You gotta stop texting and driving, people

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Neither stiffer fines, nor social shaming have stopped drivers from texting while behind the wheel.

In a new survey by the Canadian Automobile Association, one third of Canadian drivers admit to having texted while stopped at a red light in the last month.

Not surprisingly, 70 per cent of respondents agreed such behaviour is unacceptable.

"My suspicion is that there's a lot more people doing it than they are admitting to it," said Toronto lawyer and Bike Law Canada founder Patrick Brown.

"People are just obsessed with these devices," Brown said, noting distracted driving has become as common — and as dangerous — as drunk driving. "We're seeing cars on a sunny bright day, going into the opposite lane or slamming into the sidewalks and hitting someone."

In Ontario, a distracted driving ticket can cost $490, but in some provinces the fine hits $600 and includes demerit points.

To help combat the problem, police officers in North York have taken to riding buses and bicycles in order to better spot the culprits.

Brown believes the province could borrow a page from New York City, where a "textalyzer" bill is being debated that would allow police to check if a driver was texting while driving.

TORONTO'S DEADLY STREETS A FATHER WHO HAD JUST LOST HIS SON TO CANCER WAS HIT AND KILLED BY A CARELESS DRIVER. PENALTY: $1,000 FINE AND A 3-MONTH DRIVING BAN metroNEWS

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Debbie Reynolds dies one day after daughter Carrie Fisher. **World**

Helping their new home

REFUGEES

Syrian youth adjust to life in Canada with charity work

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

The YMCA has been helping Syrian newcomer youth participate in volunteer programs across the city. LANCE MCMILLAN/FOR METRO

They left everything behind as they fled war and conflict in their respective hometowns in Syria, their future uncertain.

Now, just months after arriving in Toronto, hundreds of Syrian youth are helping other newcomers and members of the community adjust to life in the city.

Through the YMCA's Arabic newcomer youth leadership development program, Syrian youth are volunteering at local food banks, assisting at various seniors' residences and participating in cultural activities across the city.

"I like to think that I am helping someone, and to meet new people I guess," said 19-year-old Heba Diab, as she and a dozen other Syrian youth helped sort and pack food donations at the Agincourt Food Bank on Wednesday afternoon.

Diab and her family arrived in Toronto last year from the city of Homs. She remembers how difficult it was to get accustomed to life in a new country.

"I was alone all the time because I didn't know anyone. And I didn't speak English," she said.

Now in Grade 10 and hoping to study science in university, she relishes the opportunity to volunteer in her adopted community.

> **Their best way to learn is through experience.**
> Karim Brahimi

Through the YMCA's English/Arabic bilingual programming, Diab and her peers meet several times a week after school for leadership training, mentorship and physical recreation.

While those meetings allow youth to bridge language and cultural barriers, it's the opportunity to "give back" to the community that helps them feel at home, said YMCA advisor Karim Brahimi.

"Their best way to learn is through experience," he said.

And they seem to like it, according to Brahimi.

"They're actually asking us to organize more of these community activities, rather than just going to the gym," he said. "It's very empowering."

Hanan Nanaa and Heba Diab help pack food at the Agincourt Food Bank in Scarborough. LANCE MCMILLAN/FOR METRO

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TRAFFIC

Sinkhole closes part of Yonge St.

The City of Toronto is anticipating that one lane in each direction of Yonge Street may stay closed as late as Thursday evening, after a sinkhole opened on Tuesday night.

The section of Yonge was closed for the rest of Wednesday evening and into Thursday morning as crews continue to repair the hole.

The sinkhole, from Roxborough Street to Crescent Road, near Rosedale subway station appears to have been caused by a cracked sewer pipe, Toronto water officials say.

Toronto Fire received a call about the sinkhole around 8:40 p.m. on Tuesday, when it was about a metre wide and half a metre deep.

Crews were dispatched quickly to start repairs and set up a bypass for the cracked sewer.

The city "is continuing the installation of the shaft required to conduct further investigations and ultimately repair the sewer," said Toronto Water in a press release. The area had to be excavated for further investigations and repairs. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Housing at tipping point

Is 2017 the year that the sizzle starts to sputter on the GTA'S real estate market? Here's what industry experts are predicting:

Realtors are looking to see if the Trump effect will ripple into the housing market. CONTRIBUTED

INTEREST RATES

Inching up of interest rates and more stringent mortgage rules are among the factors that could play a role in tempering sales in the hot Toronto region market, says Jason Mercer, director of market analysis for the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB).

Those influences could be enough for some households to put a home purchase on hold. But Mercer says most consumers will look for other choices in order to pursue their home ownership dreams.

THE TRUMP EFFECT

Bond yields have already risen, leading to marginally higher mortgage rates.

But whether the inauguration of Donald Trump will ripple into the housing market is all part and parcel of the global economy, said Mercer.

Tim Hudak, CEO of the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA), which represents 40 real estate boards across the province, is optimistic. "There certainly seems to be a view that the American economy will grow faster now," he said.

But that puts pressure on U.S. interest rates, which will force a decision around our own interest rates or letting our currency drop.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Industry sources agree that the lack of listings — resale and new homes — will continue to be the real estate story next year. Mercer predicts that resale listings will continue to materialize at very low levels, driving up prices.

April Williams, broker of record at Royal Lepage Terrequity Realty, expects listings will be scarcer in 2017 than they were this year. "I don't see a lot of people making lateral moves," said Williams. "I think we're going to see a lot more people that are either up-sizing or down-sizing, which is going to keep the amount of listings low next year."

The supply of new homes will also continue its decline, says Bryan Tuckey of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD).

CONDOS

High housing prices are bringing condo lifestyles into the mainstream for more young families, says Matthew Slutsky of online development hub BuzzBuzzHome.

He expects to see more activity on the condo market with 29 launches and 131 scheduled completions expected in 2017.

The range of choice in the condo sector continues to grow, said Slutsky. He cites mega-developments like Rogers' M City in Mississauga — 6,000 units in 10 towers — and smaller, niche buildings such as the Museum Flts in Toronto's Junction Triangle.

COMPETITION FOR HOMES

New lending rules this fall have slowed things down, said Royal LePage agent Desmond Brown, but competition is still alive and well among buyers vying for the same property.

The difference, he said, is that instead of 10 offers, the seller might be looking at six or eight. But as 2016 draws to a close, Brown said he's seeing more conditional offers being accepted and some properties are sitting on the market a bit longer.

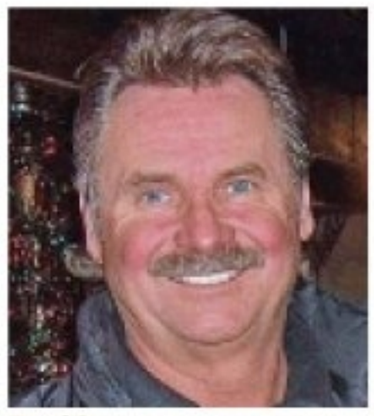
FIRST-TIME BUYERS

With the new mortgage stress tests introduced by Ottawa in October, Brown says he's already seeing fewer of the first-time buyers that fuel the market. If somebody qualified for $650,000 they're only qualifying for $500,000 under the new rules, said Brown.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

DEADLY STREETS

Man killed had just lost son to cancer



Brad Stevenson CONTRIBUTED

Less than three months after losing his beloved 27-year-old son to cancer, athletic retiree Brad Stevenson, 61, lost everything else to a careless driver.

Motorist Isiah Martin's penalty for darting a GMC across six lanes of Scarborough traffic into the path of a TTC bus, and then pinwheeling into pedestrians Stevenson and Grant Underhill, 64 — killing Stevenson and gravely injuring his old friend — was a $1,000 fine and three-month driving ban.

Two other charges were dropped in return for his guilty plea to careless driving.

"Through your error in judgment you have shaken the lives of our entire family. We will never get to see Bradley grow old," Stevenson's brother Michael said in a victim impact statement read by a prosecutor at the recent sentencing for Martin, who chose not to attend Old City Hall court but sent an apologetic statement.

The mistake stole an elderly mother's sole caregiver and the Stevenson family's joy in hugging him and watching him put on skates and swing a golf club, his brother said.

"These things we believe have been robbed from us because of the fateful decision you made on July 29, 2016," the statement concluded. "There is no fine or penalty that will bring Bradley back."

With pedestrians and cyclists dying on Toronto streets at an alarming rate — at least 45 in 2016 — safety advocates are demanding reforms to lax penalties in hopes of saving lives and reflecting the toll drivers can take. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RIGHT DOOR SIGN 'TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH' A cheeky sign put up last month by the Abnormal Beauty Company helps remind customers which door leads to the subway station on Bay Street — and which one doesn't. Mira Singh, partnerships director with the company, said it's "just to make people laugh" and entice them to come into the store.

PHOTO: LANCE MCMILLAN/FOR METRO/TEXT: MAY WARREN/METRO

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ETIQUETTE

Resolve to be nice to sales associates

Nichole Jankowski
For Metro
THE RETAIL INSIDER

Now that holiday pressure is over and a new year is upon us it's the perfect time to address the worst consumer faux pas. Resolutions for self-improvement shouldn't start and end with your personal life, so consider this a brief guide to good shopping etiquette in 2017. Follow these few simple guidelines, and trust me, your sales associate will thank you.

Ask before you touch

I've seen people drag a nail across a $3,000 handbag to test whether the leather will scratch when you can tell it's supple just by using your eyes.

If the item is on display or looks delicate, ask before you pick it up. If you don't know how to work a clasp, closure or zipper, request assistance.

Minimal makeup

If you are planning to try things on, especially dresses or gowns, do not wear lipstick or a full face of makeup. No matter how careful you are, it will come off on the clothes.

Set a time limit

Service employees are not in servitude to you. Even if they are not commissioned, it's likely they will have sales goals to reach. Their job is to meet business objectives, not to debate whether your mother-in-law would approve of an off-the-shoulder option.

If you're wardrobing, set an appointment by calling ahead. Don't come during peak hours. If you're not planning to buy, limit your time in the dressing room to 10 minutes. If you're looking at a product an associate needs to assist you with (like handbags), don't ask to try more than four or five items at a time.

Keep rude comments to yourself

The price of an item is not meant as a personal affront to you, so refrain from insulting the shop owner if you cannot afford something.

And unless you're Tim Blanks, no one cares about your thoughts on a collection.

Mind your own business

Just as you would consider it rude for a stranger to ask whether benefits covered your cosmetic dentistry, it's rude to ask sales staff about their discount.

Just remember that you are paying for product, not for the right to abuse someone. When in doubt about your behaviour, it is helpful to think of a store like the staff's living room and yourself as a guest in their home.

Shopping is less stressful when shoppers are pleasant to sales associates. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Katerina Mizrokhi and Melissa Vincent have studied how art and culture institutions function in New York. Now, they're taking the lessons they learned home to Toronto. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

OPEN UP ARTS

Mizrokhi and Vincent's recommendations for making art and culture more accessible:

- **Make arts spaces more physically accessible** by complying with government disabilities acts.
- **Enforce affirmative action policies.**
- **Look for opportunities** to collaborate with the community.
- **Create public forums** where visitors can voice concerns or ideas.
- **Appoint members** to a city-based arts advisory committee that's representative of the neighbourhood.
- **Allow for criticism** of institutions and programming, once the committee is created.

Build bridges, not walls, with culture: Students

ARTS

Institutions need to tear down barriers to community

Tara Deschamps
For Metro | Toronto

When Katerina Mizrokhi and Melissa Vincent toured New York's famed museums last summer, decadent oil paintings and intricate marble sculptures were hardly on their minds.

Instead, amidst some of the world's most iconic pieces of art, the University of Toronto students were more focused on signage, security and how many people were milling about exhibits.

Their observations formed the basis of a new report on New York cultural institutions and the roles they play in their neighbourhoods.

The experience also taught the duo that Toronto's art spaces could be doing more to engage the public.

Too often, Mizrokhi said, art galleries and museums in the city are treated like "skeletons for the next big thing to park itself down in," rather than

> **Toronto needs to evaluate how it views culture.**
> Melissa Vincent

opportunities to intertwine art with Toronto's own "cultural, historic and social cityscape."

Vincent pointed to the Royal Ontario Museum as a space she believes could better reflect the community.

She said the ROM could learn a few things from the Brooklyn Museum, which has hosted queer immigration panels, held social justice events about affordable housing or discrimination, booked a DJ to spin Latin music and even has an app allowing visitors to submit questions about exhibits and get prompt responses from staff.

Ultimately, the pair said that the first step to making art and culture more accessible in Toronto is to make it more affordable.

Children and families who can afford frequent visits to sites like the Art Gallery of Ontario or the ROM have a "completely different" experience of arts and culture than those who can go "once a year or hardly at all," Mizrokhi said.

FAITH

Atheist minister at odds with United Church

A minister deemed unsuitable by the United Church for declaring herself an atheist is now at the heart of an effort to establish a type of church-style, secular community in Canada.

Gretta Vosper is one of about 10 founding members of Toronto's Oasis Network, believed to be the first of its kind in Canada

Oasis communities, which have sprung up across the United States, are non-faith-based groups that draw people together based on five principles: "people are more important than beliefs," "reality is known through reason," "human hands solve human problems," "meaning comes from making a difference, and "be accepting and be accepted."

She said the goal is to create a free-thinking, compassionate community that offers many of the same benefits regular church-goers have experienced.

The United Church criticized Vosper for declaring herself an atheist and will hold an ecclesiastical hearing in late 2017 to determine whether or not she will be defrocked as a minister.

Vosper is fighting to keep her job as the pastoral leader of the West Hill United Church in east Toronto and said her involvement with the Oasis community builds upon what she has tried to establish there.

Congregation members and fellow ministers have supported her throughout the controversy, with one retired leader asking to be defrocked as a show of support.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A so-called "rainbow lobster" has generated hundreds of "likes" in a social media contest for craziest crustacean. HANDOUT

ALBERTA

Man punches cougar in head to save dog

William Gibb didn't know what was thrashing around in the dark, clawing at his dog, but he was going to save his pet.

The electrical subcontractor from Red Deer, Alta., was driving northwest with his brother Thomas on Boxing Day to get to work in Grande Prairie. About 6:30 p.m., they stopped at a Tim Hortons in Whitecourt to meet a friend for coffee.

Gibb let his two dogs out of his truck for a bathroom break near a wooded area at the back of a parking lot and it wasn't long before he heard one of them crying in pain. He quickly ran into the trees, where his five-year-old husky Sasha was on the ground.

"I saw this thing on top of her," said the 31-year-old. "So I ran over and punched it in the head, thinking maybe it was a coyote or something."

When the animal jumped off, Gibb said, he realized it was a cougar.

"I backed it up into a tree and was swinging at it some more and screaming for my brother and my buddy, Travis, to come over and get the dogs."

Gibb said he scooped up Sasha but she bit him on the hand, thinking he was the cat. The dog ran off and Gibb continued to fight the cat, which he said "was kind of pawing back" at him. He said he wasn't hurt by the cat — not even scratched — and got his other dog Mungo back into the truck.

His brother and friend corralled Sasha. Gibb said they quickly drove to a veterinarian clinic and called RCMP.

Mounties notified wildlife officers but arrived first at the restaurant, said Sgt. Tom Kalis.

The cougar was still in the trees and officers saw it was crouched and ready to pounce, he added, so they shot and killed the animal.

Sasha, who suffered two large cuts on her chest, four puncture wounds on her neck and other cuts and scrapes, is now resting at home, Gibb said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Claws out in odd contest

NOVA SCOTIA

Search for craziest crustacean nets wild snapshots

Social media users are casting their "likes" for photos of exotic lobsters in an online contest that has a multitude of multi-coloured, oversized and extra-limbed critters clawing to be crowned the craziest crustacean.

A car dealership based in southwest Nova Scotia put out an open call on its Facebook page earlier this month for snapshots of curious catches as a gesture for local lobster fishers.

Billy Mole, marketing manager at Murray GM Yarmouth & Barrington, says they decided to launch the competition because lobster fishers make a big portion of the dealership's clientele.

He says the "Craziest Lobster Contest" is being judged by the number of Facebook likes each photo receives.

The lobster that generates the most likes by Jan. 3 will win the title of "craziest" and the first-prize photographer will receive a $500 gift card to a local business of his or her choosing.

Mole says the first photos he received came from local fishers in Lobster District 34, but in a matter of weeks, submissions were pouring in from across the Maritimes. He says the contest has attracted more than 150 contenders. THE CANADIAN PRESS

WHAT A CATCH

The lobster gallery on the dealership's Facebook page features catches of every hue and pattern.

- In some photos, lobsters have sprouted extra limbs, others wield claws that spiral like tentacles.
- One king-sized crustacean even appears to have grown a crown on its head.

POLICING CAN BE FUNNY BUSINESS

Hello 911? My cable TV is all in French

A police force in southwestern Ontario has released a list of the silliest 911 calls it received in 2016, including one where a resident called the emergency line asking for the phone number to the local KFC.

The Chatham-Kent police service says it tries to educate citizens about the importance of calling police when they see crimes or suspicious activities, but on occasion, they say police get calls that don't quite fit into those categories.

In one call a woman dialled 911 saying all her cable TV programs were in French but she was not French. In another, police had to go to a residence to settle a heated dispute between two neighbours over the ownership of a jar of peanut butter.

There was also an instance where friends became concerned when a woman in Chatham posted "he's trying to kill me" on her Facebook page and called police after being unable to reach her. The woman ended up explaining to officers that she had posted the message online after her husband had passed gas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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A departing Kerry unloads on Israel

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Netanyahu turns to Trump after screed on settlements

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry spoke Wednesday on the need for a two-state solution. ZACH GIBSON/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry tore into Israel on Wednesday for settlement-building, accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of dragging Israel away from democracy and forcefully rejecting the notion that America had abandoned Israel with a controversial UN vote.

Netanyahu accused the Obama administration of a biased bid to blame Israel for failure to reach a peace deal.

In a farewell speech, Kerry laid out a two-state vision for peace that he won't be in office to implement, but that the U.S. hoped might be heeded even after President Barack Obama's term ends. He defended Obama's move last week to allow the UN Security Council to declare Israeli settlements illegal, the spark that set off an extraordinary and deepening diplomatic spat between the U.S. and its closest Mideast ally.

"If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic; it cannot be both, and it won't ever really be at peace," Kerry said in a speech that ran more than an hour, a comprehensive airing of grievances that have built up in the Obama administration over eight years but were rarely, until this month, discussed publicly.

Netanyahu pushed back in a hastily arranged televised statement in which he suggested he was done with the Obama administration and ready to deal with President-elect Donald Trump, who has sided squarely with Israel. The Israeli leader faulted Kerry for obsessing over settlements while paying mere "lip service" to Palestinian attacks and incitement of violence.

"Israelis do not need to be lectured about the importance of peace by foreign leaders," Netanyahu said from Jerusalem.

The duelling recriminations marked a low point for U.S.-Israel relations and a bitter end to eight years of frustrated ties between Obama and Netanyahu, who quarrelled repeatedly over settlements, the peace process and Obama's nuclear deal with Iran.

It was unclear what impact Kerry's speech, coming in the final days of the administration, might have.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Debbie Reynolds dead at 84 years old

Actress Debbie Reynolds, the star of the 1952 classic Singin' in the Rain, has died. She was 84.

Her son, Todd Fisher, said Reynolds died Wednesday, a day after her daughter, Carrie Fisher, who was 60.

"She's now with Carrie and we're all heartbroken," Fisher said from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where his mother was taken by ambulance earlier Wednesday.

He said the stress of his sister's death "was too much" for Reynolds.

Debbie Reynolds

Reynolds was not yet 20 when she won a starring role in Singin' in the Rain.

Her messy divorce from singer Eddie Fisher, who left her for Elizabeth Taylor, made tabloid headlines in the late 1950s.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donald Trump drops civil tone with Obama

President-elect Donald Trump accused President Barack Obama on Wednesday of throwing up "inflammatory" roadblocks during the transition of power and his administration of treating Israel with "total disdain."

Trump made it clear he didn't like when Obama recently boasted that he would have won the election if he'd been running.

"Doing my best to disregard the many inflammatory President O statements and roadblocks," Trump tweeted. "Thought it was going to be a smooth transition — NOT!"

Trump also took issue with the Obama administration's decision to let a UN Security Council resolution critical of Israel pass.

"They used to have a great friend in the U.S., but ... not anymore," he tweeted. "Stay strong Israel, January 20th is fast approaching!" THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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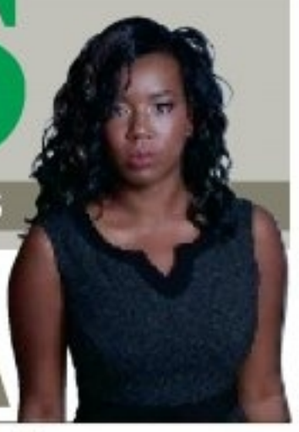
Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 29, 2016



GABRIEL ZARATE ON ONE OF 2016'S SILVER LININGS

In the struggle to preserve our atmosphere, it may be that civil disobedience, such as at Standing Rock, will accomplish as much as scientists' research or public-education efforts.

I think it's safe to say that 2016 will be remembered as a rough year. I scarcely need to recite, yet again, the litany of horrible events.

But the year also produced a small bloom of hope for the future, grown from seeds planted in the early part of the decade, in the form of movements such as Occupy and Idle No More.

At Standing Rock, a few thousand of the U.S.'s most marginalized people faced down an intimidating display of militarized state power — and prevailed. In so doing, they held back an oil-pipeline project that threatened not just the local water supply but also the earth's atmosphere, which is already reeling from the waste of global industry.

The fragile hope I mentioned earlier lies in the prospect of this victory inspiring others to action, leading to more victories. In the struggle to preserve our atmosphere, our biosphere and our entire way of life, it may be that civil disobedience, such as we saw at Standing Rock, will accomplish as much as any research or public-education effort undertaken by scientists.

My parents were scientists. I grew up with a fundamental faith in scientific progress, that it would eventually solve many of the world's problems. But what many people don't understand about science is that it resists absolutes. A scientist would almost never say, "This is a fact"; he instead would probably say, "The evidence suggests this is a fact" or, if he's dead certain, "The evidence strongly suggests this is a fact."

When applied to communicating concerns about climate change to the general public, that professional caution has been disastrous. Peer-reviewed journal articles and quiet intellectual reserve cannot compete with the bombast of multinational corporations, whose coordinated public relations campaigns on behalf of the petrochemical status quo have allowed the forces of convenient doubt to score a tie in the public mind with the forces of fact.

Activists celebrate near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota on Dec. 4 after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that the Dakota Access pipeline would be reconsidered. GETTY IMAGES

Let me put it to you this way: if you were suffering headaches and consulted 10 neurologists and nine said there's a tumour, would you believe the one who says, "Maybe it's just stress?" and who works for a company that sells Valium?

Make no mistake: energy-sector-sponsored doubt is disingenuous. Last week the Arctic was 30 degrees Celsius above normal. The petroleum companies and their flacks know what's up.

Meanwhile, scientists who aren't on industry's payroll are very, very afraid. Climate change is real, and human activity has significantly contributed to it. Only the details are still debated (how high will sea levels rise? And how soon?) The dire consequences are already being felt. Take, for one vivid example, the recent six-year drought in Syria, which, according to the CIA, contributed to the rise of ISIS: Thousands of desperate farmers, having left their barren lands to seek employment in the cities, were easy recruits for extremist militias. Similarly, multi-year drought has contributed to political instability in Venezuela. Further violence is sure to accompany the mass dislocation that climate change will bring.

Elsewhere, across the world, even amateur photographs show the glaciers of the mountain peaks are in dramatic decline compared to photos taken decades earlier. The consequences here are not merely cosmetic; those glaciers are the sources of hundreds of rivers that feed cities all over the planet.

All this makes one thing abundantly clear: the most valuable substance on our planet is not oil, which we've pursued maniacally and guarded jealously; it's water, which we've treated in a shamefully cavalier fashion. Water is, quite literally, life. In this light, the victory at Standing Rock is even more meaningful.

Similar battles loom in Canada over pipelines needed to export the oil of the Athabasca oilsands. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has pledged to fight climate change on the international scale, but his support for pipelines at home undermines his credibility. He justifies his stance by saying that energy profits will help Canada transition to a green economy. Well, that might have been a good idea 20 years ago, but we're up against, if not all the way past, the atmosphere's tipping point now.

The hard truth is that, to avoid global catastrophe, petrochemicals need to stay in the ground. We must adapt or die by the millions. Mother Nature is not interested in political or economic rationalizations.

That may be hard to face in these hard times, as so many families are struggling to make ends meet. But while parents fight to feed their kids and choose to worry about climate change another day — or not at all — they mortgage the futures of countless generations beyond.

There will be no food on the table if the seas are empty and the land is dust.

The most valuable substance on our planet is not oil; it's water, which we've treated in a shamefully cavalier fashion.

Gabriel Zarate is a Toronto-based journalist.

VICKY MOCHAMA

Friends don't let friends denigrate internationalism

At a recent vote at the United Nations on Security Council Resolution 2334, Israel was rebuked over its settlements in the West Bank.

In the ensuing fallout, Israel has loudly chastised not only the 14 nations that voted in favour of the resolution but also the United States, its ally and benefactor, which, in declining to use its veto, broke with a decades-long tradition of being Israel's over-protective and somewhat over-dramatic big brother. ("You got a problem with Izzy, you talk to me, pal.")

And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, never a big Obama fan, has been making "Can you believe this?" type gestures in the direction of the terracotta president-elect, who has tweeted much righteous outrage over the abstention.

According to Reuters, Netanyahu also told U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry that "friends don't take friends to the Security Council."

I'm not so sure that is or should be true. Friends should be able to take friends to the Security Council!

Truly good friends keep it 100 with you. And, what is more honest and real than a binding, essentially unanimous resolution from a 15-country panel of nations?

Think of all the terrible decisions that your friends have had to let pass without recourse to an international body. I, for one, could have used a debate within the Security Council over the recent purchase of a purple lipstick. While I like it, friends and family have expressed ambivalence. Yet they have done little to stop me. At the UN I could have appealed the principle of lip-based sovereignty. But a strong argument from my best friends on the premise of "looks silly" might have swayed Malaysia, Uruguay and New Zealand.

There are larger ramifications than my make-up choices. Think of the peace that could have been settled if Kimberly Kardashian West had been able to bring Paris Whitney Hilton in front of the Council. It isn't clear what broke up the two former friends but the chill that has existed between them for almost a decade has only recently started to thaw. That's 10 years of high-quality reality TV and Instagram pictures we've missed out on.

But as protective and fractious as friendships can be, some are an actual liability to world peace. The current flirtation — if we're being both generous and flippant — between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin seems doomed to end in published screenshots from Trump's Twitter DMs and hurt feelings. And by hurt feelings, I mean nuclear winter. The Security Council, whose mandate is "the maintenance of international peace and security," should, at the very least, be empowered to compel Putin to stop ignoring Trump's FaceTimes.

The future of the human race depends on it.

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Songwriter Tameka "Tiny" Harris has filed for divorce from rapper T.I.

SKINCARE

Pseudo-science behind 'clean' beauty product trend: Experts

Melissa Dunne
For Metro Canada

'Clean' beauty claims:

To be taken with a grain of Himalayan sea salt

Gwyneth Paltrow once infamously bragged about having the butt of a 22-year-old stripper, but perhaps she should have been bragging about having the skin of a 30-ish model.

Whether you love or hate the actress-cum-entrepreneur, one has to admit the skin of the 44-year-old looks ah-mazing on the cover of the new book Goop Clean Beauty, released this week.

The sleek tome, by the editors of her popular lifestyle publication Goop with a foreword by Paltrow, devotes a large chunk to the supposed superiority of "clean … organic, non-toxic" beauty products.

Paltrow, or GP as she likes to call herself, is the latest in a long line of celebs to pitch "clean" makeup and skincare products to average Janes who don't have the skin of a star, but would like to.

Dr. Julia Carroll, a dermatologist with Compass Dermatology in Toronto, says there is immense interest, with patients asking her every day about these kind of products.

"GP's Essential Six" skincare items will cost you about $1,000. Is it worth it? Likely not, said Timothy Caulfield, author of Is Gwyneth Paltrow Wrong about Everything?

The beauty products industry, both in Canada and the U.S., has little government regulation and consequently companies and celebrities have a very wide berth to make all sorts of "sciencey-sounding" claims, he said.

> **It's about profit. They're fear mongering.**
> Dr. Julia Carroll of Compass Dermatology in Toronto

Celebs like Paltrow and Jessica Alba are using fear, pseudo-science, and guilt to sell products to make a lot of money, said Caulfield in a phone interview from Calgary, where he is a Canada Research Chair in Health Law and Policy and a professor in the Faculty of Law and the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta.

Carroll concurs.

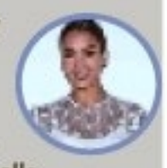
"It's about profit," said the skincare expert in a phone interview. "They're fear mongering."

Carroll advises you take the often-outlandish claims of stars trying to sell you pricey beauty products with a very large grain of Himalayan sea salt.

Let's face it — no amount of product is likely to give you GP's skin or butt. If you have an actual skin problem, see an actual dermatologist.

BRANDS

Juice Beauty
Gwyneth Paltrow teamed up with Juice Beauty to release makeup and skincare products in collaboration with Goop. The packaging is all clean lines and clear fonts that connote that these "organic, non-toxic" products look very pretty and will definitely cost you a pretty penny.



Honest Beauty
The Honest Company was co-founded by actress Jessica Alba and sells products made without a long list of what Honest Co. claims are "potentially health-compromising chemicals or compounds." Alba and co. are clearly onto something as Unilever PLC was reportedly in talks this fall to take over the brand for a valuation of about $1.35 billion.

RMS Beauty
RMS Beauty was founded by makeup artist Rose-Marie Swift and sells what it calls organic colour cosmetics. The company states that all of their beauty products are: gluten free (with the exception of the volumizing mascara), GMO free, soy free, and nano free. Supermodel Gisele Bündchen is among stars who have endorsed the items, bearing the minimalist RMS logo.

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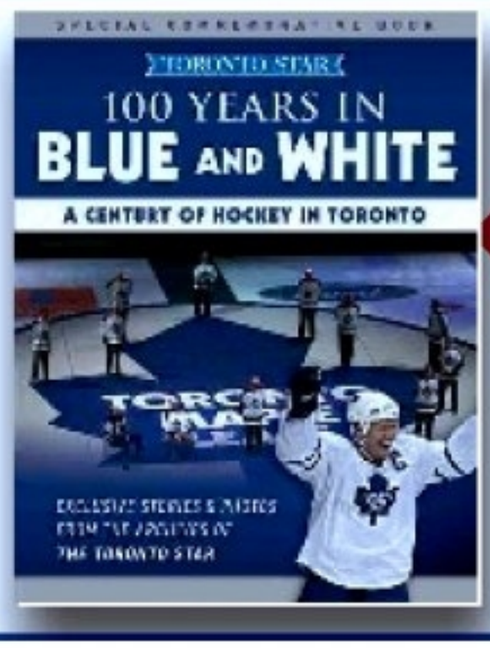

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Would you like to tip zero per cent?

An old tip jar from The Good Neighbour Espresso Bar in the Junction makes a compelling argument for tipping. But the issue has become more complex this year. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

HOSPITALITY

Industry split on moving to non-gratuity model

Restaurant owners are grappling with the thorny and complex issue of balancing the huge discrepancy in income between servers and kitchen staff created by the current practice of tipping.

Front-of-house staff generally receive a gratuity of between 15 per cent and 22 per cent while cooks who make the food may labour for minimum wage.

"The truth is labour costs are going up, minimum wages are going up, restaurant margins are going down, and so in order to close that gap and keep people working in the kitchen, restaurants are going to start taking control of that tipping revenue as a way of just making sure they can continue to meet labour costs," says Mike von Massow, a professor in the department of food, agriculture and resource economics at the University of Guelph.

The issue of tipping differs depending on the industry sector — fine dining, casual or quick service.

"And even within the certain sectors — we've done some surveys and whether to move to a non-tipping model or not — our industry is split almost evenly on the issue," says Mark von Schellwitz, vice-president for Western Canada for Restaurants Canada, who is based in Vancouver.

"There's certainly no consensus on which way to go."

Proposed models include a hospitality charge, profit sharing or a hybrid plan in which there's a moderate increase in pricing along with a small service charge.

"I'm very much in favour of cooks and waiters and all restaurant employees making a living wage, which many of them don't at this time," says Anthony Bourdain, host of Parts Unknown which airs on CNN.

"Is the no-tipping, service-included plan the way to get there? I don't know. I'm open-minded about it. I tip 30 per cent. Everyone should, in my view, but absent that, I suspect it's the future."

Dining chain Earls launched a 16 per cent hospitality charge in July at its 67th location, in downtown Calgary, to test the waters.

Craig Blize, vice-president of operations says the experiment, which the company will begin to evaluate in January, has been "polarizing."

"A lot of our staff love it. Our kitchen staff definitely loves it and our support staff loves it and the majority of the servers do as well," says Blize, who is based in Vancouver.

"There have been some staff that have been disgruntled or haven't liked that option so we have moved them to other Earls where we do have tipping." There are no plans to roll the policy out to other locations.

Meanwhile, some guests love the all-inclusive charge while others "despise" it because they feel they've lost control over recognizing the service they've received. Earls.67 will waive the hospitality charge if a client is displeased with the food or service.

But evidence suggests people don't vary their tipping much whether they've received good or bad service, says von Massow. "It's a social norm. We just do it anyway." THE CANADIAN PRESS

LABELLING

Veggie schnitzel finds itself in German political pickle

Germany's agriculture minister has leapt to the defence of meat lovers, calling for a ban on names such as "vegetarian schnitzel" for meat-substitute products, which he said were misleading consumers.

Among the "wurst" offenders is "vegan curry sausage," a meat-free take on a heavily spiced pork dish born of post-World War II necessity and now considered a delicacy in Berlin — though outside of Germany it is largely unknown.

"These terms are completely misleading and unsettle consumers," Agriculture Minister Christian Schmidt told Germany's Bild daily.

"I favour them being banned in the interest of clear consumer labeling," he was quoted as saying. "I do not want us to pretend that these pseudo-meat dishes are meat dishes."

Schmidt has already contacted the European Union's executive branch to discuss extending rules that govern the use of the terms such as "milk" and "cheese" to apply to meat as well, his spokesman said Wednesday.

"He considers names such as vegan curry sausage and so forth to be misleading to consumers," Jens Urban told reporters.

"Clarity and truth, transparency for consumers, those are the measures that should apply for the labelling of all products, always and forever."

The German Butchers' Association is also reportedly calling for a ban on such terms.

Asked whether the measures could also affect beefsteak tomatoes, Urban said that the ministry wasn't aware of any "consumer confusion" about such products.

In the interview, Schmidt — a member of the conservative, Bavaria-based Christian Social Union — also reiterated a call for schools to serve pork.

Asked whether it was right for them to leave pork off the menu out of consideration for Muslims, he said that "we should not restrict the choice for the majority of society for reasons of ease or cost."

He argued that growing cultural diversity should lead to more choice, not less.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILK TOO

Rice, almond substitutes under fire in U.S.

Got milk? Twenty-five members of U.S. Congress say if it's from soybeans, almond or rice, it should not be labelled as milk.

Democratic Vermont Rep. Peter Welch and Republican Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson, leading the charge against "fake milk," signed a letter along with other Congressional members, asking the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to investigate and take action.

They want the FDA to require plant products to adopt a more appropriate name, other than milk, which they say is deceptive.

"We strongly believe that the use of the term 'milk' by manufacturers of plant-based products is misleading to consumers, harmful to the dairy industry and a violation of milk's standard of identity," the letter states.

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Fresh year, fresh furniture

Decor trends take us on a little emotional journey every season. Some speak to how we're feeling, some to how we want to feel. For 2017, trend spotters say we're looking for ease and comfort. Even at the luxury end of the decor spectrum, the look is less stiff suit, more velvet smoking jacket. KIM COOK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEWEL TONES

Roar & Rabbit swivel chair

Roar & Rabbit's sexy, sophisticated swivel chair evokes classic continental mid-century styling. The lush berry hue is another 2017 trend, as jewel tones continue to ride a wave of popularity started last fall. WEST ELM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHADOW FLORAL

Glass art tile collection

Ted Baker's gorgeous new glass art tile collection includes this Shadow Floral. It combines two of 2017's most interesting decor trends, moody hues and dramatic florals. THE TILE SHOP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICH PURPLE

The Barry console

Designed by Brown Davis and crafted by Keith Fritz Fine Furniture, the Barry console is part of a collection of richly-hued furniture that takes a cue from Art Deco and makes it thoroughly modern.
MORIS MORENO/BROWN DAVIS INTERIORS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BURLED WOOD

Cabinet by Brown Davis

This cabinet with brass inlay and burled wood in a beautiful green, crafted by Keith Fritz Fine Furniture, is on trend for 2017, with its rich emerald tone and Art Deco styling. MICK HETMAN/KEITH FRITZ FINE FURNITURE/BROWN DAVIS INTERIORS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WALNUT VENEER

Delphine buffet

West Elm's Delphine buffet in walnut veneer, a marble top, and brushed bronze hardware suggests the chic yet comfortable style of mid-century French and Italian furniture. That continental look is a strong trend going into 2017. WEST ELM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

metro SPORTS

Blue Bombers linebacker Maurice Leggett is limbering up for his upcoming performance in The Nutcracker with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet

Canada rolls into match vs. underdog

WORLD JUNIORS

Tournament hosts refuse to take winless Latvia lightly

Dylan Strome, centre, is the only player on Team Canada's balanced attack with multiple goals. The tournament hosts have outscored their opponents 10-3. CLAUS ANDERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Two solid victories for Canada at the world junior hockey championship have helped restore confidence to a team that made an early exit at the tournament last January.

A New Year's Eve game with the archrival Americans is circled on the calendar but Canada's next goal is to defeat Latvia on Thursday night at Air Canada Centre.

The host team will not be taking the underdog Latvians lightly. Denmark's stunning 3-2 upset win over defending champion Finland on Tuesday at Bell Centre got everyone's attention.

"It's part of the tournament and we have to respect every team. We saw what happened yesterday in Montreal," Canadian head coach Dominique Ducharme said Wednesday. "We're focusing on ourselves. We're a confident team and we just want to challenge ourselves to be better every time that we step on the ice.

"There's little things that we can do better and that's the way that we look at it every day."

Canada opened the preliminary round on Boxing Day with a solid 5-3 win over Russia. A comfortable 5-0 victory over Slovakia followed a day later.

Canada has used a balanced scoring attack with nine different players finding the back of the net. Captain Dylan Strome is the lone Canadian with two goals in the tournament.

-13

Latvia has been outscored 15-2 over two losses.

"It's great to see everyone involved and getting rewarded," Ducharme said. "I think our guys are working hard. To see scoring spread around like that is a good sign of the way that we're playing as a team.

"We're going to be having success as a team and that's the way that we're doing it. Right now it's paying off and guys are getting rewarded individually, scoring is across all four lines and it's great to see."

Canada backchecked well against Slovakia and held the opposition to just six shots on net. Connor Ingram earned the shutout after Carter Hart's 17-save performance in the tournament opener.

Ducharme said the regular starter job could go to either netminder, adding he has yet to make a decision on who will be in net on Thursday night.

"We have two goalies, two solid goalies," he said. "We like them both and we're confident with those guys in net. We'll see how things go."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CP TEAM OF THE YEAR

Female swimmers make big waves in '16

Canada's female swimmers soared to unexpected heights in 2016.

Six Olympic medals followed by another seven in home water at the world short-course championship launched Canada as a world power in women's swimming.

Capping off a remarkable year, the Canadian women's swim team was crowned the Canadian Press team of the year Wednesday.

"Without the female swimmers leading the way, Canada's effort at the Rio Olympics is middling," Medicine Hat News sports editor Sean Rooney said. "With them, it's arguably the best we've ever done in a summer Olympiad.

"The fact they weren't expected to do nearly as well is a boon to both national pride and female athletics as a whole."

Penny Oleksiak GETTY IMAGES

At the centre of the year's success was Penny Oleksiak, 16, from Toronto who won freestyle gold, butterfly silver and swam the anchor legs for a pair of freestyle relay bronze.

Also winning individual medals in Rio were Hilary Caldwell, a 25-year-old from White Rock, B.C., and 20-year-old Kylie Masse of LaSalle, Ont., who earned backstroke bronze medals in the 200 metres and 100 metres respectively. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Tickets still to be had for Centennial Classic

Tickets are still available to the NHL's Centennial Classic, the next in a long line of high-profile sports events in Toronto.

A search of Ticketmaster on Wednesday showed that blocks of eight seats can still be had in multiple sections of BMO Field for Sunday's tilt between the Toronto Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings, beginning at a per-ticket price of $229. The least expensive seats ($129 per-ticket) appear to be mostly gone. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Johnson officially signs with Orlando City SC

Canadian Will Johnson signed a two-year contract with Major League Soccer's Orlando City SC on Wednesday.

Johnson had two goals and five assists in 29 matches, including 20 starts, last season with Toronto FC. He helped Toronto reach the MLS final before it lost 5-4 to Seattle in a shootout.

Johnson, a Toronto native, is a 10-year MLS veteran. His deal with Orlando City includes an option for a third season. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Easy Baked French Toast

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

A little prep the night before and you'll be sailing into your brunch party with this irresistible crowd pleaser as the centrepiece.

Ready in 30 minutes
Prep time: Overnight
Cook time: 30 minutes
Serving: 6

Ingredients
- 1 loaf of fresh challah bread, sliced
- 8 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp butter, for greasing the casserole dish
- 1 cup fresh berries
- agave nectar or maple syrup

Directions

1. Slice your challah into 1-inch thick pieces. Without using the ends, arrange bread slices in a greased 9x13 inch casserole dish.

2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk eggs, milk, sugar, cinnamon and vanilla extract. Pour mixture over bread slices being sure to coat each piece. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

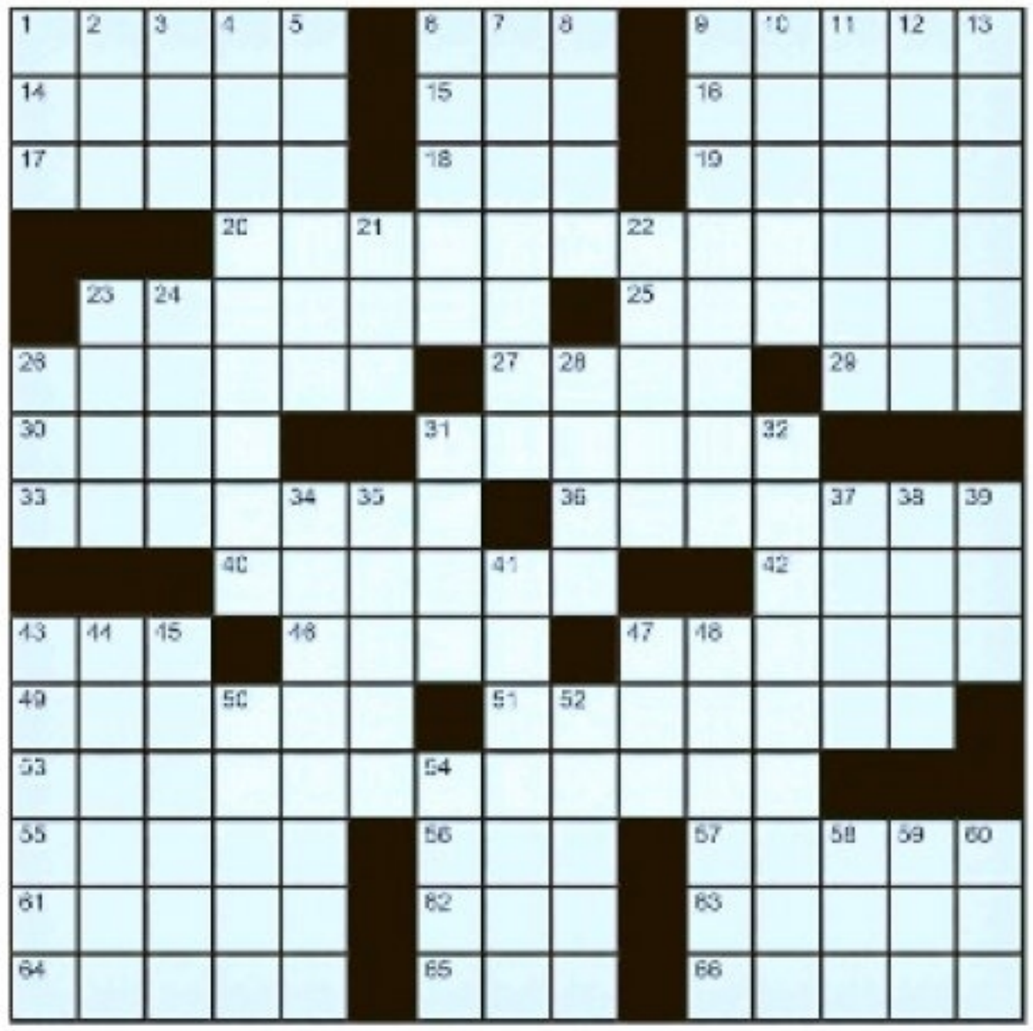
3. Preheat oven to 350.

4. Remove dish from refrigerator and allow to stand for a few minutes. Remove foil and place dish in the centre of the oven to bake for 35-40 minutes, until bread is lightly browned and egg mixutre between slices is bubbling. Serve with your favorite fresh berries and warm agave nectar or maple syrup.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Speak sans speech
6. '_' _ in Quebec
9. Fermented soybean pastes
14. "_ Vista Social Club" (1999)
15. Nice 'one'?
16. Tedium
17. Cyphers
18. YYZ monitor info
19. Singer Bonnie
20. This is how I made the gingerbread ...how did you make that fruitcake?: 2 wds.
23. American pianist Ms. Tureck who influenced Glenn Gould
25. Office
26. Mouse-like critters
27. Magazine publisher, Conde _
29. "Vasoline" rock gr.
30. Trim
31. "What's your price?": 2 wds.
33. Limestone component
36. '80s Canadian sitcom set in a ski lodge: 2 wds.
40. Opera legend Mr. Caruso
42. Isle of Scotland's Inner Hebrides
43. Parcel delivery co.
46. Egypt's river
47. "Charlie's Angels" character
49. Drinks the drink in bits: 2 wds.
51. Non-verbally say "Look at that over there.": 2 wds.
53. Robert Burns of "Auld Lang Syne" fame: 2 wds.
55. "Star Trek" star George
56. 'Hotel' suffix
57. Ms. Hedren
61. "Watch out, there's _ _ overhead." ...said the construction worker
62. "Dalla _ Pace" by Mozart
63. Has on
64. La _ (Montreal amusement park)
65. 'Fool' suffix
66. William _ (Canadian doctor, the 'Father of Modern Medicine')

DOWN
1. Alphabet starter...
2. Pair
3. Headed
4. Fundamentally: 2 wds.
5. Small central Alberta town northeast of Red Deer
6. Question
7. Beetle's sensory organ
8. Char
9. Romeo and Juliet character
10. "...the bombs bursting _ _..."
11. Wesley of "Blade" (1998)
12. Have more of the feast than the others: 2 wds.
13. Shows attentiveness: 2 wds.
21. Singer Mr. Green's
22. Actor Buddy
23. Canadian comedian Caroline
24. Unwritten
26. Utah's li'l capital
28. "Are not!" retort: 2 wds.
31. Mr. Diamond
32. Garbage bag fasteners: 2 wds.
34. Quick! When it will be the New Year once the countdown begins: 3 wds.
35. Singer Mr. Lopez
37. Shock
38. _ _'Clock (Early afternoon)
39. HBC's 'B'
41. King of Aethiopia constellation
43. Amer. celebrity: 2 wds.
44. Olympic skier Ms. Street
45. Verbalized
47. Individual's info
48. _, _, three...
50. Place
52. Ms. Winfrey
54. "Yes, yes!" in Spain
58. Chum
59. Before
60. Tel Aviv's li'l locale

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
At this time, you will meet bosses from your past or relatives you have not been in touch with for a while. It's like the past is coming back to find you.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Travel delays and changes in your travel plans are likely now. However, the good news is this is a great time to finish school projects and write important papers.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Wrap up loose details about inheritances, insurance issues, taxes and debt or shared property because old business can be finished. Focus on what is not yet done.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Many of you will run into ex-partners and exposes at this time because Mercury retrograde is opposite your sign. (Look good because living well is the best revenge.)

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
There's no question that Mercury retrograde is hassling your work routine. This is why there are delays, goofy mistakes and misunderstandings. Be patient with yourself and others.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Old flames from your past will cross your path now because of the energy of Mercury retrograde. You will especially notice this because Mercury is your ruler.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Expect to hear from family you haven't seen in a while. In fact, you might have relatives sleeping on your sofa and eating you out of house and home.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Just grin and bear it as you deal with transportation delays, car breakdowns, confused communication and silly errors. This is only temporary. .

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is a good time to finish old financial business and wrap up what is already on your plate. You might also want to revisit or resurrect old moneymaking ideas.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Because Mercury is retrograde in your sign, you will suffer from silly mistakes and mixed-up communications. Your efficiency is challenged, which is why you misplace or lose things.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
While others suffer from the delays of Mercury retrograde, you can benefit, because you find it easy to go into the past, study history and seek out answers and solutions.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Friends from the past are back in your world again. Consider this an opportunity to touch base and enjoy the company of others.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

			7		8			
	4	1				9	5	
	3	9				2	8	
2				6				1
4				8				3
	2	7				6	3	
	9	6				5	4	
			6		5			

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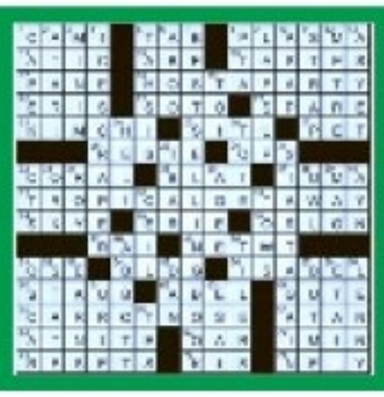
YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

for more fun and games go to metronews.ca/games



6	1	8	2	5	9	7	3	4
4	3	7	1	8	6	9	5	2
2	5	9	4	3	7	1	6	8
8	2	4	5	6	1	3	9	7
1	6	3	9	7	4	8	2	5
9	7	5	3	2	8	6	4	1
5	9	2	7	1	3	4	8	6
3	8	1	6	4	2	5	7	9
7	4	6	8	9	5	2	1	3

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Ultimate model shown ♦

- 5-YEAR WARRANTY††
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- WINDSHIELD WIPER DE-ICER
- HEATED OUTSIDE MIRRORS WITH TIMER
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